



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR NICK SHERRY

DARREN CHEESEMAN MP

Minister for Small Business
Minister Assisting on Deregulation
and Public Sector Superannuation
Minister Assisting on Tourism

Member for Corangamite

MICROBREWERY FUNDING HELPS PUT FORREST ON TOURISM MAP

A new attraction at the gateway to Great Otways National Park has been officially opened for the thousands of mountain bikers and other visitors to Victoria's western region.

Member for Corangamite, Darren Cheeseman MP, representing the Australian Government has officially launched the microbrewery and café in Forrest - made possible with funding of \$100,000 from the Australian Government's *TQUAL Grants* program.

"This attraction is breathing new vitality into Forrest and the surrounding area and is re-energising local tourism," Mr Cheeseman said.

"Before the Second World War, Forrest was a major hop-growing region in Victoria. Today, the town is re-discovering its historic appreciation of beer and tempting new visitors to Forrest.

"As the region has moved away from logging and towards recreation, new business opportunities have been created.

"This 'brewpub' is truly a local landmark – culturally, geographically and economically - and complements the region's eco-tours, mountain biking and rural accommodation.

"Visitors already spend around \$200,000 over the four days of the 24-Hour Kona Challenge and the Otway Odyssey mountain bike races, and with annual traffic through the town exceeding 100,000 vehicles, a whole new cottage industry is emerging."

Minister Assisting on Tourism, Senator Nick Sherry, said almost four million visitors to Victoria's western region spent just over \$900 million last financial year.

"Tourism supports more than 3,700 businesses in the region – a decent slice of the local economy," Senator Sherry said.

"People may come for the scenery, but they'll stay for a beer – and friendly, local staff can give visitors further insights into the area's many attractions.

"The Government has already provided over \$8 million in TQUAL Grants to help tourism development right across Australia and we've committed a further \$40 million.

"Applications are now open for the current round of TQUAL Grants and I encourage tourism operators to find out how they can access this valuable assistance."

Details on applications for TQUAL grants are available at <http://www.ret.gov.au/tourism/>

FORREST

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